

EYEWITNESSES
[BINDER] 5 of 5

DRAWER 13A

ASSASSINATION

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The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

Recollections and accounts of
eyewitnesses

Published accounts

Folder 5

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Account of George A. Low, Sr.

On the night of the 14th of April, 1865, I left the War Department at about half-past eight or nine for my third-story back room at Major Eckerts resident. in Thirteenth street. George C. Maynard was my room mate, and, if my memory serves me right, David H. Bates and Albert Hod the front room on the same floor.

I was not feeling well and had been relieved early, and I either accompanied Major Eckert home or we both arrived there at about the same time. I had gone to my room and was partly undressed when a messenger arrived in great haste with the startling intelligence that President Lincoln had been shot.

I can call to mind the hasty departure of the Major and the intense grief of his estimable wife as she came to my room door and repeated the sad news.

My first impulse was to don my clothes and go to the telegraph office, where I knew I should be needed, but her appeal that I should stay in the house, as she was alone, prevailed, and I did not go to the War Department until between five and six in the morning.

I can never forget the gloom and the saddened faces of my comrades as I entered. Mr. Bates was at the first table, and Dwight, now long dead, at the next. Maynard, Chandler and Laird were at other wires. The latest bulletins from Secretary Stanton, addressed to Major General Dix for distribution to the press of the country, which had been transmitted to New York, about the time I reached the telegraph office, told us that Mr. Lincoln was still alive but sinking, and about half-past seven we heard of his death.

LINCOLN'S ASSASSINATION

(Note—This series comprises eight accounts of the great tragedy as written by eye-witnesses who were still living when the following interesting articles were assembled by David Homer Bates, of New York City, in April 1914. Mr. Bates is known in literature as author of the book "Lincoln in the Telegraph Office.")

By Thomas A. Laird, an Eye-Witness,
Differs from Maynard's Account.

After dinner on the 14th of April, 1865, while on Pennsylvania avenue, walking toward the Capitol, I met a friend who invited me to go to Ford's theater with him. We took seats in the fourth row from the stage to the right of the orchestra leader, about fifteen feet from President Lincoln's box.

The theater was packed, it being a "gala night" because of the presence of the Presidential party, General Grant also having been expected. "Our American Cousin" was played, Laura Keene taking the part of Florence Trenchard.

The first act was about half over when the President's party arrived and was enthusiastically cheered until after the party was seated, when the play was resumed. We had a full view of the box and its occupants. Major Rathbone and Miss Harris sat in front and the President and Mrs. Lincoln were further back.

In the third act, Madame Mountchessington (Mrs. D. Kelly) leaves the stage in a huff saying to Asa Trenchard (Harry Hawk), "You don't understand the manners of good society. That alone can excuse the impertinence of which you are guilty."

Trenchard—"I guess I know enough to turn you inside out!" The audience claps and cheers.

Just then we heard footsteps in the passage back of the president's box, and very soon thereafter a pistol shot sounded loud above all other noises and a man appeared at the front of the box and leaned over the railing, pushing aside the American flags that draped it, and, with one foot on the outer ledge, swung himself outward and dropped to the stage.

His spur caught in one of the flags and he fell to the stage, but recovered himself and flourished a dagger. Stepping backward and holding his dagger above his head, he uttered the words, "Sic Semper Tyrannis."

He then worked his way to the right entrance and out to the alley in the rear of the theater.

I and others near me recognized John Wilkes Booth as he fell on the stage. To me he was no stranger, for I had seen him riding a bay horse that very afternoon down Pennsylvania avenue. I had often seen him in Cincinnati, where he played Petruccio and Iggnomar at Wood's theater.

While he was making his way out of the theater, it appeared that some one was helping him, by the way in which the scenery was withdrawn out of his path. The time was about a few minutes after ten o'clock.

Most of the audience rose to its feet, many shouting "catch him!" "He has shot the president!" "Cut his heart out!" But no one molested the assassin, and he escaped.

A woman near me had fainted at her escort's feet. I helped to place her in a chair. Many others were in hysterical condition. I lost my com-

panion in the excitement. The noise was awful; the tumult and shrieks continued.

Miss Keene stepped to the front of the stage and, raising her hand, said "Please be seated. The President is not dead." She then picked up a glass of water, came down the steps near the drummer of the orchestra, passed me in the center aisle and worked her way through the crowd toward the street front, turned to her left and came back to the President's box.

All this occupied possibly two minutes; so short a space of time, and yet long enough for all to realize that a most dastardly deed had been committed.

I went out of the theater to Tenth and F streets and ran to the house of Major Thomas T. Eckert, Assistant Secretary of War, three blocks above where I lived. On reaching the door I burst in abruptly, ringing the bell as I entered. A colored servant met me in the hallway and said, "Why Mistah Laird, you g'wine tear dat door down."

Major and Mrs. Eckert, on the floor above, came to the head of the stairway, asking "What's the matter?" I said, "President Lincoln has been shot, at Ford's theater, but was not dead when I left, a few minutes before."

The Major was shaving himself, his face being covered with lather. He remarked, "I will be down in a moment." He was ready almost immediately, and as we reached the street he told me to hasten to the War Department telegraph office and notify the manager, Mr. Bates, of what had occurred; request him to summon to duty every operator available and see that every wire was manned. It required but a few moments of lively sprinting to land me at the War Department, where I delivered Major Eckert's instructions to manager Bates, who was on duty with others of the telegraph staff, including Albert B. Chandler and Geo. C. Maynard. The latter had been in the theater when the President was shot and had come direct to the telegraph office. Soon we were all busy sending and receiving important dispatches relating to the tragedy and to the efforts of the authorities to find the assassins.

Major Eckert established a relay of messengers between the Tenth St. house and the War Department, and sent us frequent bulletins written by Secretary Stanton, which we transmitted over the wires for distribution to the press.

For several days the telegraph operators had their meals served in the telegraph office by order of Mr. Stanton. We lacked nothing for comfort except more exercise for our limbs beyond the confines of the building.

Thomas A. Laird

HE SAW LINCOLN SHOT.

Captain Silas Owen's Experience in
Ford's Theater on the Fatal
Night. 1895

For 30 years Captain Silas Owen has carried in a little envelope, securely hidden in his pocketbook, a square piece of cardboard, on which are these words:

FORD'S.
FRIDAY.
Orchestra.
Section B.
Seat 173.

It is the coupon of the ticket which Captain Owen used at Ford's Theater on the night that Lincoln was murdered. The Captain was then the commanding officer of the United States ship Primrose, and he and his master's mate, William R. Flood, had gone to the theater especially because it was understood that the President would be present, and Owen had taken seats that would be directly in the line of vision with the presidential box. He cherishes the memento warmly, and frequently talks to his friends about that awful and impressive incident. He is a trustee of Round Lake, and in one of his recent official visits here he gave an interesting reminiscence of it.


"Flood," said he, "was the first man to reach the President's side, and I was the second. The firing of the shot hardly gave us any idea of the awful deed that it indicated. Booth clambered down the side of the box and crossed the stage, and even then we could comprehend nothing of the awful nature of the catastrophe, until Mrs. Lincoln leaned over the edge of the box, wringing her hands, and with a face of terror and amazement that will never be erased from my memory, called aloud, 'They have shot pa.' I remember the homely phrasing so well.

"That was enough. Flood was out of his seat as if he had been shot from a mortar. He jumped over the head of the leader and climbed into the box before the rest of the audience seemed even yet to comprehend it. To shoot the President seemed, even in all the horrors of the long war, to be yet something too incredible.

"I followed Flood and was second at the side of the dying man. Flood found him still sitting in his chair, but with his head resting on his breast, and he gently lowered him to the floor. There was no sign of any wound and no flow of blood and we believed that there was no disaster until while Flood held his head in his lap he felt the soft trickling of matter. It was not blood. He showed it to me and we knew that the dreadful deed was complete. It was the pure white matter of the brain.

"I see stated that they show people the dress of Laura Keane at the tomb, all dabbled with the President's blood. If this is so it is a mistake, for Mrs. Keane was not at the President's side that night, to my knowledge. The blood was shed most likely by Booth's knife, for the assassin made a stroke at her with it. And that calls for another correction. It has been frequently told how Booth strode majestically and tragically across the stage and with a flourish of his dagger cried 'Sic Semper Tyrannis!' As a matter of fact he did not stride majestically at all. He pulled one foot after the other very slowly, for he had fallen as he jumped, his foot being caught in the folds of the American flag which enveloped the lower edge of the stage, and sprained his ankle, and his stride was a most painful process. At the side of the stage, just between the curtain, which was down, and the edge of the proscenium box, stood Mrs. Keane, who had been there some time. She was not in front receiving the applause of a recall, as has also been stated, nor was Harry Hawk with her. Booth dragged himself up to her and she seemed to comprehend ahead of the rest of us what had happened, for she put her hands out toward him and said, 'What have you done, John?' He then made a thrust at her with his dagger and seemed to rip the sleeve of her dress, and he probably wounded her in the arm, for it was a savage blow. It was then that he uttered the cry, 'Sic Semper Tyrannis!'—that incredible parody and mockery of the noble Roman's utterance.

"The memory of that great event," said the Captain, "will remain vividly with me forever, as it remains now, over 30 years after it happened."—New York Tribune.



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MAN WHO SAW
LINCOLN SLAIN
REPEATS THE TALE
— 2,12,1923

Washington— Lincoln's birthday finds national dignitaries voicing encomiums of the great emancipator of the nation and school boys reciting his Gettysburg speech, but it also found an elderly gentleman, feeble with age, sitting by his fireside, recalling a shot, a spurt of flame and a gasp of horror in Ford's theatre on a tragic April night nearly sixty years ago.

On the eve of the anniversary of the great martyred president's birthday, Henry B. Polkinhorn, now 70 years old, lived again those exciting moments of his boyhood.

On the morning of the day Lincoln was shot, this little boy of 12 ran into his home greatly excited.

"Mamma," he cried, "I want to go to the theatre tonight. General Grant is going to be there!"

But it was Good Friday, and his mother demured. He carried his appeal to his father, who printed the programs for the opera house, and obtained a pass for a front seat to see his hero.

Grant did not come. Instead the attention of the audience was diverted to a box immediately above the boy in which sat President Lincoln and his party. The play went along, then a man jumped from the flag draped box and then confusion reigned.

"I was wildly excited," the elderly gentleman continued, with a faraway look creeping into his pale blue eyes.

"I remember I got up with the rest of the surging crowd. Everyone pushed toward the doors. They had been ordered barred. No one could leave. But I was only a small boy, alone, and crying from fright, and I was permitted to go.

"I remember I ran all the way home and my father was sitting up to let me in. 'Father,' I cried, 'they shot Lincoln. He's dying.'

"But my father thought I must be wrong. While he was trying to calm me and get a connected story of the tragedy, we heard newsboys shouting extras on the street, extras that told of the assassination."

He stopped and ran his hand over his heavy white hair and beard.

"And then there was mourning, Henry," prompted his wife, who sat opposite him, leaning forward, listening again to the story she had often heard her husband tell to old friends.

"Yes," he answered, sadly. "There was mourning and a hushed city."

A long line of presidents have come and gone since that memorable day in Henry Polkinhorn's life. But he retired from active business early in life and has kept to the seclusion of his home for many years, taking

little, if any, active interest in the political life of the day.

He seemed to prefer roaming in the memories of the past, the days when he played on the school grounds with the Grant boys. Several times in later life, Polkinhorn has by coincidence crossed the trail of that terrible tragedy he witnessed in Ford's theatre, as when he met, years afterward, the son of the man on whose place the slayer, Booth, blindly sought refuge and where he was shot down and killed.

But with the vivid remembrance of that shot and that spurt of flame, he mourns every year on the eve of his birthday.

NEARBY AS BOOTH KILLED LINCOLN

Col. John Chubbock of Oklahoma Eye Witness of President's Assassination.

FAILS TO CATCH SLAYER

Octogenarian Present at Ford Theater Tragedy Recalls All Details.

/S/2

SPECIAL DISPATCH TO THE GLOBE-DEMOCRAT.

SAND SPRINGS, OK., December 22.—"I was sitting within a few feet of Mr. Lincoln when he was assassinated. I saw Booth walk along the aisle next to the wall and pass through the door onto the stage. I was watching him closely, but not suspiciously. He walked up behind the president, and before I knew or realized what he was up to he stepped nimbly aside and a deafening shot rang out. It was all done so quick no one seemed to realize what had happened. While it may seem incredible, I leaped from the small railing around the orchestra to the footlights and was within a few inches of the assassin when he dodged around some scenery. I followed and know I would have caught him when he fell had it not been for some of the excited stage hands who blocked my way."

The man who gave out this interview to-day is Col. John Chubbock, who was born August 23, 1829, in Bradford County, Pa., and was for many years assistant commissioner of agriculture under Isaac Newton, and for more than thirty years an officer of the law among the Cherokee and Osage Indians. Col. Chubbock is the man who came very near capturing Booth, and probably would have had Booth not made the leap which was supposed to have resulted in a broken leg, about which Col. Chubbock is doubtful. It was Col. Chubbock who touched the match to the barn wherein the remains of President Lincoln's assassin was supposed to have been consumed. The colonel is at the present time deputy sheriff of Tulsa County and special officer at Sand Springs Park.

Col. Chubbock has always been in doubt as to whether the man in the barn was Booth. Some years ago he went to Enid, Ok., to view the remains of a suicide who was supposed to be none other than Booth. He unhesitatingly stated to-day that it was his opinion that the suicide at Enid was Lincoln's assassin, and that the man who was burned in the barn was not Booth. Col. Chubbock, upon being questioned, said:

"I sometimes feel positive the dead man I saw in Enid was Booth, and again, I look back over the many intervening years, and think I may be mistaken. You, of course, understand that my eyesight, while I do not wear glasses, is not so good as it was on that memorable night; and furthermore, I take into account the personal appearance of the living at that time and the dead man I saw at Enid. And, as I say, I may be mistaken. I have nothing absolute to go by, only the stealthy, cat-like movements of the actor as he approached his victim and the frenzied dash of the murderer after the terrible deed had been perpetrated."

"I came from Springfield, Ill., to the Cherokee Nation about forty years ago, and since then have lived among the Cherokee, Creek and Osage tribes. In the early days I carried a commission as a deputy United States marshal and frequently took part in court proceedings at Fort Smith, Ark., when Judge Parker was on the bench."

NEARBY AS BOOTH KILLED LINCOLN

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FAILS TO CATCH SLAYER

Octogenarian Present at Ford Theater Tragedy Recalls All Details.

1812

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SAW LINCOLN SHOT

1854
From Burrell's Washington, Iowa, Press.

Captain J. H. Busby of Highland, foreman of the grand jury, was in Ford's theater the night President Lincoln was shot. He was in the 188th Ohio and was sitting not far away, in full view of the president's box, along side Lieutenant Sear of the 187th Ohio, and Lieutenant Orman. Major Rathbone sat between Lincoln and his wife. Play, "The Country Cousin." It was a carnival night, all feeling jolly that the war was over. Lincoln had just returned from the front and seemed as happy as an archangel and smiled and bowed at the frantic audience as they rose and cheered at his entrance for full ten minutes. The play had been drowned and when the ovation ceased the actors went back and started again. Busby did not see Booth steal into the box, but at the sound of the pistol he looked up and saw Lincoln's head fall on his breast. He says he was green and supposed it was a part of the play. But instantly there was a confusion. Booth leaped from the second story box to the stage, right hand upraised grasping a dagger, revolver in left hand across his breast, and turning full to the audience shouted, 'Sic semper tyrannis!' words that burned themselves into Busby's soul. He hears and sees them still, in his dreams by day and by night, they were so vivid. Major R. cried out, "The President is shot!" and he leaped to the stage and chased Booth into the green room, and Busby followed with many more, and heard one actress say, "It was Booth." Another said, "Hush, you'll be made a witness." "I don't care a d—d," she retorted, "it was Booth." Lieutenant Sear went to the box and helped to carry Lincoln across the street to the house where he died. Everybody was rattled, or Booth might have been shot down before he left the building, as lots of soldiers were there, each carrying a revolver. In a few minutes the city was patrolled by men of the infantry, cavalry, artillery. Busby stood guard all night and far into the next day. He distinctly heard the clatter of the feet of Booth's horse. He did not walk lame on the stage—not a bit—he was so wrought up, tho' his leg was broken. He has never since met a man who was there that night, and would give a V to see one to talk it over and compare notes. Years later, at Bull City, Kan., he was introduced to Sergeant Corbett, who shot Booth in the barn. Washington was as full of Johnnies as of Yanks, but they hunted their holes. Busby saw one fool shot down for saying he was glad Lincoln was shot. He was riddled, and in hell in less than two minutes. It was a wild night, and men lived years in those few hours. Captain Busby rightly counts it the one great experience of his life.

THE KILLING OF LINCOLN.

SOME FRESH REMINISCENCES OF THE ASSASSINATION.

Booth's Narrow Escape From Instant Capture—A Lucky Accident Saved the Life of Secretary Seward—Stories Told by Eyewitnesses of the Memorable Tragedy.

1694

To the younger generation, who know the murder of President Lincoln only as history, the accounting to which the chief conspirators were called brings the whole tragedy to a satisfactory conclusion. Their elders, who retain still in detail the impressions made upon their minds at the time, feel that the dignity of justice was sacrificed to dramatic effect when Booth was permitted to die in so picturesque a fashion instead of being captured alive, tried by a court and hanged like a common felon. It is not generally known that, but for a single hitch at the outset of his pursuit, he would probably have shared the gallows with his fellow-plotters.

James A. McDevitt, the well-known Washington detective, was in those days a member of the public detective force, with an office in police headquarters in Tenth street, only about 100 yards away from Ford's Theater.

"That was a night of horrors," said he the other day, recalling the assassination in conversation with a friend; "but in view of the pitch to which public excitement was wrought up, it is wonderful that there were not more bloody scenes enacted. I was engaged at my usual work at headquarters when Major Richards, then Superintendent of the Metropolitan Police, suddenly rushed in, making a straight line for one of our two telegraph instruments. 'Take the other instrument, quick,' he called to me. 'The President has been shot. We must send out a general alarm!' I ran to the second instrument, and we soon had the news flashing in every direction through the city. The detectives were sent out to find persons who could give us any information pointing to the identity or whereabouts of the assassin. As fast as we could find a man who had seen the shooting or had had a good look at the face of the murderer, or who knew anything whatever about the affair, we would bring him in and make him tell what he could.

"Meanwhile a crowd had gathered in front of headquarters. A large part of it was composed of soldiers—odds and ends of the army who were hanging about Washington. They were wildly excited over the murder and eager to get hold of anybody concerned in it. You know what a false notion outsiders sometimes have of anyone who is seen in the hands of the police. Well, these soldiers saw us bringing in one man after another, and jumped to the conclusion that each one was a conspirator. They wanted to storm the building, carry off these people and hang them to the trees in the street. The uproar was reaching a dangerous height, and I made up my mind something must be done or we should be unable to protect our charges. I went out on the steps, therefore, begged the crowd for a brief hearing, and made a little off-hand appeal to them.

"You are the friends of the President," said I, "and so are we. You are anxious to see justice done to the perpetrator of this crime, but your anxiety is no greater than ours. If you will help us, instead of hindering us, we shall be able to do our work. These people who are coming to headquarters with us are not criminals. They are friends of the President, too. They are coming here to tell us what they know, so that we can use the information in capturing the assassin."

"The crowd acted very well indeed. They received my speech in good faith, and made way for us thereafter as we came and went with our witnesses. I was out on one of these scouting expeditions when I met a man whose face seemed very familiar. He was evidently an actor whom I had seen on the stage, and the impression left on my mind was that it was John McCullough, the afterwards famous tragedian. I do not want to speak positively on this point, for I have never ascertained whether

McCullough was in Washington at that time or not. At any rate, the man stopped me, called me by name, and gave me this startling hint:

"If you want to find out all about this desperate business, keep an eye on Mrs. Surratt's house in H street."

"Mark you, this was the first intimation given or received by anyone as to where the plot was hatched. I acted on it without delay. With some other detectives, I visited Mrs. Surratt's house and searched it; we turned it over to the military to watch, and it was they who captured Payne as he was returning to the house disguised as a laboring man, with a pick on his shoulder. I found there, by the way, a young man named Wickham, who proved so useful that I kept him under arrest for some time, not letting him out of my sight—even taking him home with me for his meals. It was on the strength of what I learned from him that I made an expedition to Canada in search of the trail of John H. Surratt, and armed with the commission of a Post Office Inspector, traveled on a mail car from Montreal to New York in company with a letter which had been addressed to Surratt and mailed in the Montreal Post Office. But all that is another story.

"To come back to Washington and the assassination, it may interest you to know how near we came to catching Booth the very night of his flight. We traced him from the stage door of Ford's Theater up through the alley and into F street, and then eastward to the Anacostia bridge. One of the bridge tenders described a horseman who had crossed the bridge at just about the time when Booth at the gait at which he was moving could have reached it from the theater. We hastened back and reported. The Police Board at once made a request of the military authorities for a few cavalry horses to mount a picked body of our men on, and a cavalry escort for the party, who were to strike at full speed for Charles County, Maryland, towards which we believed Booth headed. Had the request been granted, I have no doubt we should have caught up with him at his first halting place. But it was refused, and he obtained a good start in consequence."

It has doubtless passed out of most persons' minds that Albert Daggett, who from 1890 to 1894 was the contractor who supplied the United States Post Office Department with postal cards, was private secretary to Secretary Seward at the time of President Lincoln's assassination.

"I was at Ford's Theater on that memorable Good Friday evening," he said to the writer the other day. "A friend and myself had our attention attracted by a great placard hung out at the theater door, announcing that General Grant was to be present at the evening performance, and, as we had never seen the General, we bought tickets. We were disappointed, however, in the main purpose of our visit. General Grant did not appear. This fact undoubtedly defeated one of the plans of the conspirators and spared the country the horror of a double tragedy."

"I was personally acquainted with Booth, and met and chatted with him in a restaurant adjoining the theater just before he went in to kill the President. He preceded me into the building, and went directly up to the President's box. I worked my way through the crowd more slowly, and had just passed down the aisle to the point where a railing divided the parquet circle from the orchestra stalls when the noise of the pistol shot rang through the house. I saw Booth spring from the box, tearing himself free from Major Rathbone's hands as they tried to pull him back. I heard him shout, 'Sic semper tyrannis!' though at the distance at which I stood the words were indistinguishable. The audience seemed stunned for an instant, nobody realizing what had happened. The first spectator to clamber over the footlights and up on the stage was a banker named Stewart, who boldly followed Booth, and would probably have caught him but that the fugitive actor knew all the ins and outs behind the scenes, whereas the pursuer caught his feet in ropes and stumbled over tail-pieces and bumped against wings, losing ground rapidly and being thrown off the trail, so that by the time he reached the stage door the assassin must have been well down the street."

"What did you do?"

"I hurried as fast as I could to the President's box. A surgeon who happened to be in the house had already got there, and had cut Mr. Lincoln's clothing open at the back of the neck so that his wound could be found and dressed. You know at the start no one could see where the shot had entered. Mr. Lincoln wore a broad collar and an old-fashioned stock. The surgeon with his knife slashed down through col-

lar, stock, coat and all, laying bare the orifice of the wound and showing the helpers what they were to do. I shall never forget the appearance of the President. His face and upper neck were bronzed and roughened by years of exposure, but of course had paled a good deal from loss of blood. His body, however, where the clothing had covered it, was as soft and smooth and white as the skin of a delicate woman.

"We carried Mr. Lincoln across Tenth street and up into what is now known as the Lincoln House. There, in one room, several of the friends and official associates of the President gathered about his bedside, while in the adjoining room an inquiry into the awful business was begun. Everybody we could find who could give any sort of connected story of the tragedy was brought in and cross-questioned. The answers were taken down by Corporal Tanner—the late Commissioner of Pensions—who was an expert stenographer and then a clerk in the War Department.

"As soon as I could be spared I hastened over to Pennsylvania avenue, headed for Willard's Hotel, which was then the great rendezvous for everybody who had news or gossip, and it occurred to me that I might pick up some more valuable information there. Just as I reached the front of the hotel I met some men running down from the corner of Fifteenth street, calling out to everybody they passed that Secretary Seward had been assassinated. I waited to hear no more, but made a bee line for the Secretary's house. There I was relieved to learn that the Secretary, though badly wounded, had escaped with his life. His case shows how sometimes what we consider a misfortune proves a stroke of good luck. He had been out driving shortly before this fatal day and been thrown from his carriage with great violence, breaking his jaw. The physician had fixed up a steel mask, or frame, to hold the broken bones in place while setting. All the family bewailed the accident bitterly at the time it occurred. After that Good Friday night, however, they realized that it was a blessing in disguise. Payne, the boldest and most desperate of the whole group of conspirators, entered the sick chamber, knife in hand, and found Mr. Seward in bed, lying on his left side, with his face towards the wall. The assassin pulled him over and stabbed viciously at his neck.

"The blade struck the old man's face, on which three deep gashes were cut, but in descending to the neck, was met by the steel mask and glanced off. This alone saved the Secretary's life. So, if Mr. Seward had not broken his jaw in his carriage accident, he would have shared President Lincoln's fate.

"One incident in connection with the tragedy illustrates the ease with which the public will sometimes jump to conclusions and the way an illusion will cling in the mind when once thus hastily fixed. The morning after the assassination the relic hunters gathered in force near the house where the President died, in the hope of getting a chip from the doorstep, where it was spattered with blood. Everybody's assumption was that because Mr. Lincoln had been shot, the blood on the step must be his, and that idea is cherished to this hour by many who were there. It was a mistake. I was one of the party who helped carry the President over from the theater, and I can testify that no blood fell from his wound on the way. But Major Rathbone, who was stabbed in the arm by Booth in the course of their struggle in the box, was too excited to notice his own condition; he was bleeding, and it was his loss of blood on the doorstep that attracted his attention to the necessity of doing something for himself. It was Rathbone's blood, therefore, which was mistaken for Lincoln's."—New York Post.

J WRIGHT

WOMAN RECALLS HEARING SHOT FATAL TO LINCOLN



Seventy years ago when she was a bride Mrs. Aglia Goodale went to the old Ford Theater in Washington and heard the shot that snuffed out the life of President Lincoln.

A dark, crowded theater on a peaceful spring evening, 1865.

Suddenly a shot rings out. A moment of silence, then a scream: "The President has been murdered!"

As the Ford Theater turned instantly into a pandemonium of cursing men and shrieking women, a young bride looked up at her husband, weeping silently. President

Lincoln had been shot—murdered, probably.

Today, living with her daughter, Dorothy Woods, at 1975 Beachwood Drive, Hollywood, 91-year-old Mrs. Aglia Goodale still remembers clearly that night of April 14 when her hero-President was assassinated.

Mrs. Goodale confessed yesterday that: "When you speak of Mr. Lincoln, it just seems to 'pep' me up."

LIFE IN LETTERS

American Autograph Journal

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NO. I

AS THE GREEK'S SIGNAL FLAME

(For Whittier's 80th birth-day, December 17th, 1887.)

*As the Greek's signal flame, by antique records told,
(Tally of many a hard-strain'd battle, struggle, year—
triumphant only at the last,)*

*Rose from the hill-top, like applause and glory,
Welcoming in fame some special veteran, hero,
With rosy tinge reddening the land he'd served,
So I aloft from Mannahatta's ship-fringed shore,
Lift high a kindled brand for thee, Old Poet.*

WALT WHITMAN.

C. N. BURNHAM: LINCOLN'S ASSASSINATION

Cameron, Missouri, 3-21, /'17.

Dear Sir:

As I was at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D. C., at the time of President Lincoln's assassination, I will, at your request, give you a few lines describing the event as I saw it:

I had served three years as a soldier in the Army of the Potomac (Co. H, 10th Penn. Reserve Vol. Corps,) been through all of its battles up to and including the battle of Fredericksburg fought by Burnside, where I was captured and taken to Libbey prison, from which in due time I was parolled and exchanged.

On the day of the President's assassination I was visiting

I Saw Lincoln

Shot

The Story of
an April Memory
that Lived for
Sixty-nine Years

by Lieutenant
John B. Rivard
as told to
Frank M. Butler



The scene after Booth's leap—as it must have looked to Lieutenant Rivard in his box opposite Lincoln's. From a contemporary drawing.

READING TIME • 3 MINUTES 45 SECONDS

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Rivard fought through three years of the Civil War. Discharged from the Union army with the rank of lieutenant, he married and stayed in Washington for a honeymoon. On the night of April 14, 1865, he took his bride to Ford's Theater; there she would see Abraham Lincoln. The play was a comedy, *Our American Cousin*. Booth's pistol turned the occasion into tragedy.

On February 27, 1934, not long after telling Mr. Butler this story, Mr. Rivard died in Woodbine, New Jersey. He would have been one hundred on May 24.

MY memory is not so good as it once was for recent happenings; but I can never forget the assassination of Abraham Lincoln.

I was only the width of the stage from him when he was shot. I do not believe that anybody actually saw the shot fired. If they did, why was not the alarm raised sooner? I was in a location to have seen as much of what went on in his box as anybody except his party and the actors on the stage; but I did not happen to be looking at the moment. Furthermore, an appreciable length of time elapsed between the report of the pistol and the cry, "The President has been shot!"

This cry came from his box, and even there no one noted Booth's presence until the shot rang out. Major Rathbone, who was the first to see Booth, probably did not realize that he had done more than shoot at the President. As Booth leaped from the box, the major merely cried, "Stop him! Stop that man!" and the actors and stage hands were so thunderstruck that they failed to do anything.

No one can say exactly how long it was from the time the shot was fired until Miss Harris of the President's party called out that he had been shot. But between those two happenings Booth had struggled with Major Rathbone and stabbed him in the arm and had leaped to the stage, breaking one leg; he had then regained his feet and hobbled to the footlights to yell, "*Sic semper tyrannis!* The South is avenged!" and had managed to get away to the stage door and to mount his horse for flight.

Laura Keene, the actress, ran to the footlights and exclaimed, "For God's sake, keep your seats and everything will be all right!" Miss Harris called for stimulants,

and Miss Keene inquired what the trouble was. "The President has been shot!" was Miss Harris's answer. Naturally, all eyes had been on Booth, and this was the first, as I believe, that any one outside of the Presidential party knew of what had happened.

My bride and I had not gone to the theater merely to see Lincoln, but the fact that he was to be present had made me doubly proud to take her. I had bought seats in the box directly opposite the President's.

The first act was more than half through when he and his party came in. General Grant and his wife were to have accompanied the Lincolns, but in the afternoon the general had been called out of town. I have always felt that if Grant had been in the President's box that night the dreadful happening would have been avoided, as he was a restlessly active man and would probably have detected Booth's presence in time.

A big easy armchair had been provided for the President. I can see him and his party yet as they sat there. He laughed at the jokes and chatted with the others, and once he rose and put on his overcoat. It was a cold night and the theater was none too warm.

All was gayety and pleasure; nothing gave the slightest warning. Suddenly the shot rang out. Everybody at first, apparently, thought it a part of the play. When Miss Harris cried out what had happened, a woman screamed "Murder!" and then bedlam broke loose. Instantly the audience was changed into a howling, raging mob. Those too weak to buffet it were knocked down and trampled. We saw that we could do nothing, so we waited in the box until soldiers came in and restored order. Army surgeons in the audience made their way to the Presidential box, and Lincoln was then carried to a house across Tenth Street.

When we reached the street a vast crowd had gathered, and men with ropes and torches were yelling, "Kill the rebels! Burn the theater!" Undoubtedly they would have set fire to it but for drastic action by the military. All night long mobs roamed the streets, making such a disturbance that no one could have slept.

As it was, newspapers issued frequent editions throughout the night and everybody stayed up to hear reports of the President's condition. It was only after the announcement of his death, shortly after 7 A. M., that we undertook to get any rest.

THE END

Woman Recalls Flash When Lincoln Shot

BY DAMON RUNYON JR. 1934

(Copyright, 1938, by United Press.)

LORAIN, Ohio, Feb. 12.—Ninety-year-old Mrs. Josephine Butler rocked in a creaky chair by a small potbellied stove in her cottage today and told of the night of April 14, 1865, when in a remote telegraph office in

Connellsville, Pa., the sounder clacked out the flash:

"President Lincoln shot. Not expected to live . . ."

"I was stunned," Mrs. Butler, who at that time was a Morse wire operator for the Pennsylvania Railroad, recalled. "Henry Blackstone—he was president of the road then, and a man named Frick—that big mining man from Pittsburgh—were in the office at the time.

"It was strange, too, because we'd just been talking about the President when that flash came through. I was so shocked I could hardly work the key to relay the message to Uniontown.

Only 18 Years Old.

"I had to stay on the job all that night to relay the story of Lincoln's assassination in the Ford Theater in Washington. The next day I was worn out. I was only a young girl then—about 18, I think."

The little old lady was silent for a few minutes.

"It was a shock to the whole Nation at that time," she said. "The Negroes seemed to feel bad because they felt they owed Lincoln so much. And the white folk not only were saddened, but I think many of them were a little scared of what the Negroes might do.

"A lot of people had been wearing black, anyway, because of the war, and when church let out on Sunday it looked as if a great black pall hung over the whole world."

Mrs. Butler looked a bit wistful as she sat in the small living room of her tiny cottage. It was filled with antique furniture, paintings and knick-knacks.

Lives All Alone.

"I live here all by myself," she went on.

"I've been alone ever since I was a little girl. My mother died when I was 5, and I never saw my father and brother after that. They left me with relatives. I had to do something to make a living, so I learned the Morse code. Then I got the job with the Pennsylvania Railroad.

"It was real quiet in that lonely little office with just the three of us talking about Lincoln. Then that sudden clatter that told us he was dead.

"I saw him only once," she went on, "and he looked like a big farmer boy—thin as a split rail. His face had a charitable look stamped on it. Sometimes I see it before me today."



He Saw the Tragedy of April, '65



1. 27. 1923

Andrew Jackson Huntoon

THERE are few people living today who were present at Ford's theater in Washington on that never-to-be-forgotten night when President Abraham Lincoln was murdered by John Wilkes Booth. One of these is Dr. Andrew Jackson Huntoon, for many years a valuable official of the United States Civil Service Commission. In many respects Dr. Huntoon is one of the most remarkable men in the city of Washington. Despite the fact that he will be 92 years old on his next birthday, he is as active as the average man of 60. He hops on a street car every morning, in front of his residence near the Capitol, and rides to his office which is located a few blocks from the White House, where he puts in as good a day's work as anybody. Each afternoon when he quits work he takes a leisurely jaunt of two or three miles along Pennsylvania Avenue and the other prominent streets of the national capital.

Dr. Huntoon says the shooting of Lincoln, and the ensuing exciting events, were so indelibly impressed upon his memory, that they are just as clear to him today as they were an hour after the tragedy.

He attended the theater that night with his wife, and they occupied seats in the balcony directly facing the presidential party. It so happened there was no better point of vantage in the building. It was a gala night. The long unhappy war was at an end. The large fashionable audience was in a joyous mood, eager to manifest its deep love for the great President, and to celebrate the coming of peace, as well as to enjoy the theatrical performance. The audience was in the rarest of good humors. All seemed smiling and contented, and were engaged in saying pleasant things to one another.

Suddenly, without the least warning, came that awful pistol shot, which, for some seconds, paralyzed the audience. Down from the box to the stage leaped Booth.

"I turned to my wife," said Dr. Huntoon, "and told her that Lincoln was shot. When Booth reached the stage I distinctly heard him say: 'Sic Semper Tyrannis.' I know, of course, that this has been denied, particularly by W. J. Ferguson, who was a member of the theatrical company playing at Ford's that night, but they don't know what they are talking about. Booth positively did make that remark. I'll swear to it.

"When Booth leaped to the stage, he fell, but quickly recovered himself, and before the audience fully realized what had happened he had disappeared back of the stage, and escaped through the alley. I never witnessed such an exciting and distressing scene in all my life. All was in an uproar. Many men and women were crying like broken-hearted children. Several women fainted, and determined men hurled strong words at the brute who had shot our beloved President. I observed several agile men climbing up over the stage lights in an effort to find the assassin.

"I was nearby when the men carried Lincoln down. At first they were carrying him headfirst, and then turned him the other way, and thus carried him across the street to the house where he passed to his reward the following morning. I stood close enough to the stricken leader, when they reversed the position of his body, to have laid my hand upon his head.

"Never has there been such a wildly exciting night in Washington. Soon all sorts of terrible rumors were in circulation on the streets and homes. It was claimed, by some, that Secretary of State Seward and General Grant had both been murdered. It was a sleepless night for the people of Washing-

ton. I can never, never forget the awfulness of it.

"I attended the trial of the conspirators who were arrested for the murder of Lincoln. I listened to the testimony that was presented. During the intervening years a great many people have made the claim that Mrs. Surratt, one of the most prominent defendants, was not guilty and should not have been hanged. In my opinion she was absolutely guilty of complicity in the horrible crime, and the jury performed its clear duty in rendering such verdict.

"I met Boston Corbett, the United States soldier who shot Booth while he was barricaded in the barn over in Virginia, and secured his autograph. Corbett was a spectacular figure in Washington during the investigation and trial."

MOTHER KNEW WEBSTER

Dr. Huntoon was born in the little town of Unity, Sullivan County, N. H., Dec. 4, 1831. His mother knew Daniel Webster, and many of the noted men and women of that period. The early life of this man of many summers and winters was devoted to school teaching. When President Lincoln asked for volunteers to put down the rebellion, Huntoon exchanged his teaching job for that of carrying—and using—a musket. After two years of service he was badly wounded at Chancellorsville, and left on the battlefield for dead. Ten days passed before he was removed from that unhappy predicament, and given medical attention. Notwithstanding this terrific experience, he was still full of fight. The moment his wound was healed he insisted upon going back to the front to participate in more scrapping, but thereafter he manipulated his sword with his left hand. Enlisting as a private, Mr. Huntoon was advanced to second lieutenant, first lieutenant and captain.

He was in Washington when Lincoln reviewed the Armies of the Potomac and the James. He was present when Lincoln delivered his last public address from a window at the White House. He has had the pleasure of being introduced and shaking hands with every President from Abraham Lincoln to Warren G. Harding. He has been a Mason for 56 years, and had the honor of being Commander of the Department of the Potomac of the Grand Army of the Republic.

At the close of the war he became identified with the government service in Washington, holding important positions in various departments ever since. His education was completed in the night schools of Washington.

He became well acquainted with General Grant, and expressed high praise for the manner in which he looked after the interests of former soldiers in getting places for them in different departments. He is particularly proud of the fact that his medical diploma was handed to him by General Grant on the night of his graduation.

Replying to the query as to how he has managed to retain his health and clearness of mind all these years, the genial old gentleman smiled, and replied: "Well, I've just lived natural, and took things as they came. I've walked several miles every day, I've eaten what I wanted, never loafed, kept reasonably cheerful, smoked good cigars,—but never got down to chewing."

FortWayne.com

Posted on Sat, Apr. 15, 2006

Lincoln guard's letter found

Called president's assassination "the most terrible night."

From The Associated Press

RICHMOND — An Indiana man who was a bodyguard for Abraham Lincoln called the president's assassination "the most terrible night that we guards ever endured," documents discovered this week show.

"I myself felt as if our government was gone, but thank God it still exists," Harry Hoover wrote in 1921, 56 years after Lincoln was shot at Ford's Theatre in Washington by John Wilkes Booth on April 14, 1865.

Reporter Rachel Sheeley found the six pages of Hoover's handwritten memoirs in the archives of the Palladium-Item in Richmond. She was looking for photo to go with an article being written by Steve Martin, research librarian from Morrisson-Reeves Library.

The first page begins, "This evening 56 years ago, the 14th day of April 1865, was the date of one of the most terrible tragedies that ever happened in the United States, the assassination of Abraham Lincoln ... by that arch traitor, J. Wilkes Booth."

Hoover wrote that he was marching down the theater aisle during the performance of "Our American Cousin" when he heard a shot and the screams of first lady Mary Todd Lincoln. Booth fled in the ensuing pandemonium, Hoover wrote.

"It was all we could do to form a passageway to get Mr. Lincoln's body out of the theater," the account states.

After the Civil War, Hoover became a printer and moved to Richmond in 1885, where he lived until his death in 1928 at age 84.

Records show Gov. Oliver Morton helped secure a spot for Hoover on the White House patrol guard after one of Hoover's brothers was killed in the war.

Palladium-Item publisher Patrick Doyle donated the items to the Wayne County Historical Museum.

"The letter has tremendous historical significance," Doyle said. "While it's nice for anyone to hold on to history, we knew that something like Hoover's letter had to be in the hands of a museum that could care for it and share it with the public."

EYEWITNESSES
[BINDER] 5 of 5

DRAWER 13A

ASSASSINATION

